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AUGUST, 1954

Say Editors Themselves

Wanted New Writers

of Stories,
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for Magazines, TV, Motion Pictures

If you've been reading the writers' magazines lately, you will have noticed how editors are earnestly searching for new writers. For instance, a man's magazine editor says, "Besides strong first person adventure stories and articles, we are interested in science subjects, medicine and unusual experience pieces . . . \$500, \$750 and up."

A top slick editor says he is having a hard time getting 5,000 word fiction of interest to men—\$850 and up. Short shorts—\$750 base rate. A romance editor says she wants all lengths—2,500 word shorts to 10,000 word novelettes—with realism, sincerity and emotion.

An executive editor in Hollywood says, "Writers will discover in TV the finest opportunities they have ever known! . . . We need writers for westerns, comedies, mysteries. But above all, we need men and women for half-hour dramatic shows."

A "how to" editor says writers are missing a well-paying field in this market.

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What readers say

In a Picture Quandary

I would appreciate more instructive articles on pictures and illustrations of any kind. I am not an expert photographer nor am I an artist. And it isn't always convenient to obtain someone to do such work.

I have read articles that advise the writer not to spend time trying to illustrate his work; that publishers have their own illustrators. Yet some publishing companies ask for good illustrations, saying that these are very important.

I have had artists agree to illustrate for me, but they never get around to doing it. This has held up my rewards terrifically. I am in a quandry.

ARVILLA C. NICKERSON

Gilboa, N. Y.

Longstreth Is Unique

The Joseph E. Longstreth article in a recent issue hit the spot with me. He is unique as a writer; has a keen sense of humor and knows his ground.

HUGH E. ANDERSON

Terrell, Texas

Help for Comics Writer-Artists

As professionally I am a newspaper cartoonist I was very interested in Earle C. Bergman's "Your Gamble for Big Stakes: Newspaper Comics," also his roundup on the comic book markets.

Have been trying to peddle a comic idea for two years. His writing hit the nail on the head, as I both write and draw.

J. NORRIS

Dayton, Ohio

Davis Enlightened and Helped

That enlightening and greatly encouraging story in *A&J*, "Don't Call Me a Photographer,—But—" is so clear and I believe fits into the hopes and dreams of so many would-be writers and picture takers that I for one have checked it for a fourth reading.

J. Charles Davis, 2nd, in this splendid article lifts one out of the doldrums and incidentally incites one to never miss subscribing to this informative, wholesome, also business-like appearing writers' journal.

JAMES O. SPRINGER

San Diego, Calif.

Like many another of your subscribers I'm a part-time freelancer, having a regular occupation which demands most of my time. Freelance writing has done a great deal toward making my life more interesting during the past 15 years or so, and I enjoy it more than ever. It's work, but more work that one likes can be a lot of fun too.

Thanks for all the help I've received through *A&J*. I liked the article by J. Charles Davis especially, to name just one. Thanks a lot.

BENNIE BENGTON

Kennedy, Minn.

AUTHOR & JOURNALIST



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Dear You Who Are Tired Of Rejections:

Saint Paul said: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for . . ."

In Webster's unabridged dictionary, 'substance' is defined primarily as that intangible something which underlies all achievement, accomplishment and production, whether materially tangible and physically observable or spiritual-ly discernable.

That includes every thing; doesn't it?

Well . . . what is basic to and precedes the production or manufacture of the pencils you use, for instance, or of your typewriter? The answer, obviously, is thought.

Then thought must be substance! And Saint Paul could have added: "and thought is the substance of accomplishment"!

Thought, though, can have little substantial value unless it is contained (like the color in paint, also intangible) and then is applied skillfully.

This containment is accomplished by drawings or pictures and graphs or, with greater facility, by characters or letters indicative of vocal sounds or speech: by the formation of words.

Then words are individually packaged thoughts!

They are bits of material with very specific and quite definite meanings; they are substance which, if pieced together in a faultless mosaic, are bound to produce that which is desired by those who utilize them!

If your use of words fails to produce the desired result, then it must follow--as night follows day--that you have been negligent or careless or have used counterfeit or shoddy material instead of words of the highest value . . .

And, because a knowledge of fault and its sabotage must precede perfect production, you should consult a specialist in the use of this tricky and highly potent substance--dynamic, power-packed words--when you have erred and do not know or cannot discover why.

Ask one who dares to tell the truth!

Yours very sincerely,

Ralph E. Fitz-Gibbon

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Glendale, Calif.

Inspiring—or Idiotic?

For weeks I have fought with my conscience since receiving my May *Author & Journalist*. The article "So You're Going to Quit" hit my Achilles heel.

For the past three years, I've dropped all my short story attempts and dug into that novel that has been simmering for fifteen years. The odd notes (really odd) I'd done from time to time over those years had to be discarded. I realized after having done some study and attending one class that it lacked entirely in continuity, suspense, theme, and what not. I outlined my story, graphed it as I went along, and now am within a few chapters of ending it.

Now, I've never hunted but I believe I know just how a green hunter feels the first time he draws a bead on that nine point buck. Somehow, though I've written a chapter now and then, those last chapters have been dragging their feet. And I've never been so busy in my life doing housework, sewing, organ practice—anything but the writing. I faced up to the reality at last after reading Mr. Brown's article, that I've been goldbricking because I'm afraid to cast my cross-eyed first-born literary child to the wolves for fear of what they will do to it. And they will, I have no illusions about that.

But now, I believe I have the courage to face it let come what may. I know I must write from now to eternity, for that is part of me and I am not whole without it.

JOSEPHINE HANSEN

Miami Shores, Fla.

In the May *Author & Journalist* was an article by Wayne Brown called "So You're Going To Quit." I would like to know in what way this article helps the beginning writer. It is obvious Mr. Brown wrote this piece of idiocy for himself. Here's an example:

"You began to see new depths and dimensions in all things; the concepts that had governed your existence melted away into the shadows of that trackless void that surrounds a probing mind, and out of that void came a new force of expression that was fascinating in its intensity."

And then Mr. Brown has a glass of water making an idiotic speech.

Ordinarily I might have laughed. But I didn't. I just got good and sore. When I buy a writers' magazine I want to get something useful out of it, not just to read some other beginner sound off, trying to be arty when he's just being dull. In the information you gave about Wayne Brown you said he was studying to be a professional writer. So that makes him a beginner. A beginner who writes for himself, and not for others.

This is a long letter, so it won't get printed. It's a critical letter, so it won't get printed. But I want you to know it's not a letter from a beginner. I've sold to *Manhunt*, *Spaceway*, *Imagination*, *Amazing Stories*, etc. This is a letter from an angry writer who would like to see good helpful articles from competent writers, not showoffs like Wayne Brown. I usually don't sound off like this but that piece of junk really steamed me up.

ARNOLD MARMOR

New York, N. Y.

Books for Writers

In this department are reviews of important books of special interest to writers. As a service to its readers, *Author & Journalist* will supply any of these books at the published price postpaid. Send order with remittance to *Author & Journalist*, 1313 National Bank of Topeka Building, Topeka, Kansas.

WRITING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN, by Claudia Lewis. Simon and Schuster. 116 pages. \$3.

A book about juvenile writing from a new and fruitful angle. The author analyzes children on the basis of their own language and then shows the techniques of writing that will present the world as it looks, sounds, and feels to children. No one who follows this method can fail to write more effectively for a young audience.

THE PHRASE FINDER, compiled by J. I. Rodale with the collaboration of Edward J. Fluck. Ph.D. Rodale Press. 1325 pages. \$6.95.

This elaborate volume contains a cross-indexed dictionary of noted characters and the qualities for which they are proverbial—"famed as the sayings of a Confucius"; a metaphor finder—"ignorant—not know chalk from cheese"; a list of "sophisticated synonyms"—like "the popular congressional game of fool-the-voters."

Some of the entries are exceedingly novel and vivid; others are timeworn. The book will prove a serviceable reference tool to the writer who doesn't try to follow it slavishly but uses it as a means of stimulating his own imagination in matters of style.

THE GIANT ANTHOLOGY OF SCIENCE FICTION, edited by Leo Margulies and Oscar J. Friend. 580 pages. Merlin Press. \$3.95.

Two top hands in the science-fiction fantasy field have collected into this volume ten short novels averaging about 20,000 words each. Included is the famous Ray Cummings story, *The Girl in the Golden Atom*—which, first published in 1919, laid the foundation for later development of the genre. The other novels date from the forties and fifties and come from such outstanding practitioners as Leigh Brackett, Robert A. Heinlein, and Murray Leinster.

An admirable anthology for sheer reading pleasure or for studying specialized technique.

September Writers' Roundup

The Writers' Roundup under auspices of the League of Utah Writers will be held at Provo September 10-11. Richard Armour, Martha McMillin, and other well-known authors will speak. There will be talks and workshops on fiction, articles, and poetry. Dr. Carlton Culmsee, president of the league and dean of the school of arts and sciences in the Utah State Agricultural College, will preside.

The fee for all sessions, including the conference dinner and the poets' breakfast, will be \$10. Address inquiries to Eileen Gibbons, Secretary-Treasurer of the League of Utah Writers, Utah State Agricultural College, Logan, Utah.

AUGUST, 1954

THE UZZELLS and PLAYING IT SAFE

If you need help with your writing, why not consult critics known to be competent, friendly, and prompt? Why not come to us at once instead of wasting time and money seeking short cuts and bargains? If you're in trouble, you'll come to us eventually. If you're in trouble, you need someone who's an expert at solving that trouble and not a salesman or an advertiser who needs some pocket money or a "critic" who'll work for nothing. Smart writers listen to this advice.

Our textbooks on writing (Harcourt, Brace and Lippincott) are standard in college libraries and will be found on successful authors' desks everywhere. We are recommended by leading publishers, editors, noted authors, agents, teachers. When you come to us, you buy our enthusiasm for what you're doing. We have no hired "readers"; we do the work ourselves; our letters are from us personally to you. Our fees are moderate. We'll help you sell when your work is marketable.

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—Minneapolis Tribune

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Judge Your Own Manuscripts

By AUGUST DERLETH

THERE is perhaps no aspect of writing so difficult for most beginners—as well as for a good many professionals—as the sound judging of a manuscript. This is true primarily because the author is so close to his work as to be out of perspective, and is thus unable to see it in relation to similar work from other hands. But it is also true in part because the judging of a manuscript must take place on two allied planes—seeing it as a whole, and at the same time seeing it in its components, which involves word sense, detail selection, sentence and paragraph structure, and, in essence, the way in which a theme, or a story, or an essay is presented to the lay reader.

The trouble most writers encounter arises, of course, from their frequent failure to recognize the fact that what they have so well-rounded in mind has simply not been conveyed in similar completeness on paper; looking over a finished work, for example, they are all too prone to read into it what is not there for the reader who does not have in mind what the writer had in his. The writer pads out his reading in such cases with his intention—but for the reader the intention is absent, and he is thus unable to pad out what he reads as the writer does. Failure to make this differentiation, to read a manuscript from the point of view of the lay reader and not the author, is the first major stumbling block in the path of the writer's ability to judge his own manuscript.

This, of course, is judging a manuscript for its

total effect, to discover whether the writer has said what he meant to say. How effectively he has done so is the secondary problem, but one which is not separated from the other for any editor who may read the manuscript. The primary problem remains to achieve the ability to see his own work as others may see it, to look at it as critically as an editor might. Certainly the white heat of creation is not the best time in which to make the attempt, unless the writer has the ability to balance his pleasure in the completion of his writing assignment by an equal enthusiasm for a new work, for there is nothing like a new creative work to lend perspective to the writer who looks back on something finished just before.

All too often the writer thinks he has put down just what he meant to say, because, in reading his manuscripts, he tends to see all his meanings clearly, since he has them so well in hand and constantly before his mind's eye, and thus he fails to see that they are not always put down for others to read or imply. When the writer is in perspective, his vision is not clouded by his intentions or by his creative knowledge, or even by his affection for what he has written, for there is no denying that there is a strong bond and pride in creation which is often a completely prejudiced fondness for the work of his pen, shackling a writer. This, in a very real sense, is the offspring of his mind, and the writer takes all the pride in it that any parent takes in his children. Certainly the average writer, especially the beginner, finds it well nigh impossible to be objective about his work at first.

Yet his success may depend on that very objectivity. There are basically three ways in which to gain objectivity in regard to one's own work, to get away from it for sufficiently long a time to diminish that overweening affection for one's own work which afflicts every author in greater or lesser degree. First, and perhaps best for most writers, is the achievement of perspective which only separation from the work under study can give. The frequent advice to "get away from it" for a while is still the soundest for those writers who find it impossible to look at their work objectively. It may be necessary to put the manuscript on the

This month August Derleth's seventy-fourth book, The Land of Gray Gold, a junior historical novel, will be published. Two anthologies of fantastic and science fiction edited by him, Time to Come and Portals of Tomorrow, will appear later in the year. Mr. Derleth's previous books include fiction, biography, poetry, history, and other fields. He has contributed to hundreds of magazines in the United States and foreign countries.

Mr. Derleth has appeared often in Author & Journalist, most notably with his brilliant series of articles, "On Becoming a Writer."

shelf for a week, a month, perhaps even as long as a year, until its author has achieved that detachment necessary to enable him to view it free of the fire of creation with all its biased enthusiasm. Shelving the manuscript and permitting time to diminish that bias which permits a writer to see his work only in its most favorable light may be for some writers the only way to gain a healthy perspective.

But in one sense, it may be the least desirable way of achieving this end, since often so much time must pass that a writer is in danger of going beyond regaining perspective and reaching that unhappy stage where he is completely "dead" on his work; that is to say, that stage at which he no longer cares about its imperfections. The point to be reached is one at which the writer's confidence in his work is diminished neither by disinterest nor by a blinding fondness for it. Only the individual writer knows when that point has been reached, but basically, it is at that period of his creative growth when he no longer believes that his work is the greatest treatment of the subject to be had, but quite possibly equal to or a little better in some parts than the average.

Secondly, a sweet reasonableness in regard to one's own work may sometimes quite rapidly be achieved simply by reading as widely as possible of related subjects. It is perfectly true that virtually everything worth saying has already been said; new writers flourish because new generations demand new perspectives, new terminology, new impacts; but it is excellent discipline for the beginner in writing in particular to see for himself how well what he has just finished saying has previously been said, and how often. Reading critically helps to develop in the reader-writer a capacity for reading his own work with a similarly critical eye, and it is surprising how often a little humility will help the writer to see his work in a perspective more nearly akin to that of an editor's.

The writer must, by his very nature when he is creating, feel, in the self-confidence necessary to implement it, that his work is fresh and original, that it is as good as the best, perhaps even better; it is this ego-drive, this self-confidence, which sustains his creative mood and carries him through to the end. If he were afflicted with self-doubt, he would probably never finish most of the work he begins. But once he has reached the end of his manuscript, he no longer needs this overpowering ego-drive. He can diminish it without harm and turn to such critical faculties as he may have.

TO some professional writers, self-criticism is second nature; they are happily able within a day after finishing work to begin tearing it to pieces, rewriting it, often junking respectable portions of it. For the beginner, this is almost an impossibility; the self-confidence with which he has written his work is balanced by the kind of self-confidence the finished work gives him in return. He hesitates to touch it; he may even—and some writers at the beginning of their careers are given to such sad extravagance—think it as perfect as it can be, which is an indication of how much out of perspective he may be. Let him only turn sober-

ly away from his work and read a little in the pages of others who have written of similar or allied themes or subjects to gain some humility and regain a little balance. For the ego-drive which brings a manuscript successfully to its conclusion, turns into useless conceit when it sustains an uncritical belief in that manuscript's perfection.

FINALLY, the easiest of all courses open to the writer who needs to develop perspective in regard to his work without loss of time, either the individual piece or the work as a whole is in turning immediately to other creative writing. This effects a transfer of the ego-drive to the new work in progress, and with it goes all the affection lavished upon the earlier work; now the new piece is certainly the "better"; now this one is apt to be his "best work"; and in no time at all—a few days, a week—the writer is able to look upon the earlier work with a fine critical eye, and to decide without further recourse to other means of gaining perspective just how well it stacks up with other writings in the *genre*, and, if it is below par, how he can bring it at least to par if not above.

Just as, in my early years as a writer, I was in the habit of immediately writing a new story to have it on hand to cushion the shock of rejection by affording me hope in the newer story, so I soon learned that I was better able to judge my manuscripts from a proper perspective if I moved from one type of writing to a totally dissimilar type, and looked back on the one from the perspective of the other. For example, the strictures and conditions of a detective story helped me to judge a serious tale written just before, the binding form and patterns of poetry taught me to recognize lack of restraint in prose, and so forth.

This course may not be possible for all writers. That is one further reason why some writers are not at their best for critical estimation of manuscripts immediately after the completion of a work—for many writers, creating may be physically and mentally exhausting, and a recuperative period is definitely necessary before either beginning a new work or looking over the old. For these writers, of course, the alternative of turning immediately to a new work must be deferred until the creative tide flows once more. The process is not made unnecessary, but only delayed, unless, as in some cases, the recuperative period is at one and the same time a balancing one which brings with it the necessary perspective.

Then, too, there are many writers incapable of versatility, particularly at first, when they need perspective in judging their manuscripts most keenly. For all those rare examples of men and women who seem to write with the greatest of ease, creation is an agonizing process for most writers, and it is simply not easy to be casual about it. Yet, without perspective, no writer can competently judge his own work. The more readily, for instance, a writer can look upon his manuscript with an editorial eye, the more easily he will be able to sell it. The old editorial adjuration to "study the magazine" before submitting stories to it is nothing more than one way of learning to appreciate the perspective of the editor, and sending him submissions he is likely to use, on the basis of what has been published in his magazine under his editorial guidance.

"Studying" a magazine, however, does not mean simply informing one's self about the type of story printed and then imitating that type. It means to familiarize one's self with the basis of the magazine's appeal to its readers, to recognize the generally favored themes used in its fiction, to get to know its preferred kind of treatment of material.

This goes far beyond mere imitation of subject matter or theme. A magazine, for instance, which habitually aims at the 20-35 age group is not likely to be especially interested in stories about the problems of old age, but rather about the problems of its preferred age group. A magazine which publishes Western stories will not be interested in adventure fiction of the Far North.

Incredibly, many writers submit to markets material which those markets could never use; even those writers who have only a superficial acquaintance with a market often make the mistake of submitting stories patterned exactly after some story which has appeared in that market.

"Studying" a market therefore means learning both the point of view of the editor and of the reader, as distinct from the writer.

The more readily a writer looks upon his work with a critical perspective, the more rapidly he will be able to write. To get out of one's self and look at one's work without the affection every creative writer naturally has for his work is unhappily easier to talk about than to accomplish. Some writers create very slowly; for them the completion of any work is a major accomplishment, and their inability to see it in editorial perspective exists in direct ratio to the achievement as it is measured in their own eyes. Some

writers, even when writing swiftly, write so sparingly that ideas and plots seem to them of such rarity as to be treated with the greatest of tenderness, once each has evolved into a story.

For such writers, too, it is difficult to cut the umbilical cord and view their own work as but one among many similar offspring of many other creative people, past and contemporary. And this cord must be cut; so must all those tenuous bonds which connect the story to its sources, for knowledge of sources, knowledge of the "real people" or events on which any manuscript may be based, very often gravely distorts the perspective. I have been accused of similar lack of perspective in my fondness for my autobiographical novel, *Evening in Spring*, simply because I am so familiar with the "characters"; it may well be as true of the professional writer as of the amateur.

Yet, without the proper perspective, without detachment, it is impossible to properly judge one's own manuscript. No matter how easy it may be to judge the work of other writers, it takes a certain amount of rigorous self-discipline and experience to achieve detachment enough to see one's own writing in the perspective necessary to be able to criticize and revise it. No one else can instill a writer with that perspective; only by his own directions, his disciplining of himself, can he achieve it. Without the perspective to see and judge his work as against the vast body of other published work by other writers, the beginner can never hope to adequately revise his work for publication.

This is the first of a series of articles by August Derleth on judging your own manuscripts. The next article will appear in an early issue.

First Rule in Interviewing: PREPARE

By MILTON LOMASK

STRICTLY speaking, every time a writer seeks information from another person, he is conducting an interview. What I have in mind, however, in this consideration of interviewing is the large or de luxe variety, the kind that begins as a rule with a telephonic request for an appointment, after which the writer presents himself at the interviewee's home or place of work, where for an hour or so he engages in the sport of picking a fellow citizen's brain.

Until recently, an interview—a relatively new literary device of American origin—was usually cut and dried. A reporter or freelance buttonholed a celebrity, inquisitioned him and published the results in more or less dialogue form. Nowadays, a writer interviews for one or a combination of several reasons: to get information, to verify information already obtained, to procure for his personal opinion the *imprimatur* of a "name," or to convey to his readers the life work, philosophy, character or personality of an interesting individual.

It is axiomatic that a writer should bring to every formal interview a pretty thorough knowl-

edge of the interviewee and his field. It is a mistake, however, for him to wear this knowledge on his sleeve. Nothing is more conducive to good conversation by the interviewee than for the writer to approach him in a spirit of humility, real or assumed. To play smart is to run the risk of damming up the source of supply. "Why should I throw my pearls before this smart alec, seeing as he knows the answers already?" Some such thought, no doubt, has crossed the mind of many an expert confronted by a young writer fresh from a bout with the encyclopedia and *Who's Who*.

To play smart, particularly in the opening gambit of an interview, is for the writer to throw away his strongest weapon, the freedom of the seemingly "dumb" to ask the interviewee from time to time, without embarrassment, to repeat a statement, give a concrete example or define a term.

How the interviewee says things is of course as important as what he says, and the writer should listen hard. He should look hard, too—the interviewee's physical surroundings, his expression, whether he does or does not "doodle" on his desk pad—all these are part of the "information" the writer is on hand to get.

WRITING A POEM

By MARY HOLMAN GRIMES

When all my lines rhyme nicely
And for once the meter's good,
And every phrase expresses
Just the thought it should,
Someone is sure to ask me
(I could tell them, but I won't)
How I write so easily—
The answer is: I don't!

Questions should be phrased with care, and often the best question is the provocative statement. *The Daily Tribune this morning says so and so. I assume, Mr. B, that you agree with that.*

Questions too should be provocative. Not so hot: *How did you feel when you discovered uranium?* Obviously better: *What took you scientists so long to discover uranium?*

Obviously bad are questions that can be answered "yes" or "no." *In your opinion will Mr. X run for President?* That invites a brush-off. A superior phrasing would be: *What factors in the political situation lead you to believe Mr. X will run?*

It is a good idea to be prepared to ask each important question in a variety of forms. If "form one" doesn't elicit enough information, try the others when opportunity arises.

Should you take notes? Copiously and openly as a rule. There is a school of thought which says the appearance of a notebook makes the interviewee nervous. My experience has been that he is more likely to be unnerved by its absence. It gives him a sense of security to see you get out the old slate, thus indicating your desire to quote him accurately.

There are exceptions, to be sure. Recently I interviewed the head of an organization about to go under the microscope of a Congressional investigation. He was understandably cagey, and it was apparent from the outset that the best place for all writing material was in the pocket. The minute I left his office, however, I started scribbling. Everything a faulty memory could salvage from the interview was in my notebook before I pushed the bell for the elevator.

If the interviewee is a very busy person, tell him you realize this and plunge promptly into your main questions. Usually it is better to break the ice with preliminary chatter. Ask the banker what he thinks of abstract art. Ask the artist what he thinks of the stock market. The implication is that you consider the interviewee a person of such consequence that his *obiter dicta* on any matter are of essence.

Flattery will get you nowhere, you say? This sort is relaxing to both parties. It gives you a chance to sense how the interviewee's mind works. It gives him the same opportunity. If your questions and comments are intelligent, he's likely to conclude you're a person he can trust to interpret him properly.

A study of the methods of competent reporters indicates that the most important part of the "interview de luxe" is its preparation. If the interviewee is prominent, look him up in *Who's Who in America*, or in one of the many biographic tools

devoted to specific fields: *Who's Who in Commerce and Industry*, *Who's Who in the Theatre*, *Who's Who in Philosophy*, *Religious Leaders of America*, the directory of the American Psychological Association, *Twentieth Century Authors*, etc. In consulting the periodical indexes for material about or by the interviewee (and articles by him may carry a little biographical data), watch for the abbreviation "Por." It indicates that the article referred to is accompanied by a photograph or drawing. A study of this may enhance your knowledge of the sort of person you will be dealing with.

Current developments in the interviewee's field are ordinarily traceable through the local newspaper morgue, the *New York Times Index* and *Facts on File*. Its overall lineaments and terminology can usually be found in a general or special encyclopedia. Questions should be prepared in multiple form and memorized. It is not a bad idea to rehearse the interview. Many practiced writers do so, either alone or with the aid of some long-suffering member of the family.

The writer, of course, should take care not to get trapped in his own efficiency. Ordinarily when the interviewee digresses, it is advisable to shoot in another question and yank him back on the track. But listen hard. The digression may yield information far superior to what you set out to get. If so, encourage it. To get the most out of an interview, plan it with exacting care but conduct it with flexibility.

BERNARD Shaw broke into the writing business by selling a recipe. "A poisonous item," he conceded later, "but it got me over the hump." Every beginner, eager to "get over the hump," owes it to himself to scrutinize the market with the idea of determining in what fields the demand is highest. With this in mind, I am going to wind up my article on research by calling attention briefly, to some research tools of particular value to writers dealing with what seem to be the current popular subjects.

History (the historical novel, so-called "literary history," so-called "fictionized biography," etc.): Most useful overall source book is *An Encyclopedia of World History*, compiled and edited by William L. Langer. For bibliographies, historical society holdings, etc., see *Guide to Reference Books* ("The Mudge") by Constance M. Winchell.

Religion (articles, books, the "religious novel"): The big source book is the 12-volume *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by the late James Hastings. This is magnificent: comprehensive, up-to-date, evocative, with full bibliographies. Among its many riches is a 2½-page section on the religious terms used by the American Indians. The first dip into this tremendous work gives you the heady feeling of having attained to another "peak in Darien."

Business (1,000 magazines in 74 fields, most of them clamoring for good writing): Coman's *Sources of Business Information*, previously cited in this series, is the guidebook. The five fact-crammed volumes of *Moody's Investor Services* are a mine of information. Also of use is the *Statistical Yearbook* published by the United Nations.

Science (science fiction, popularizations, etc.): Canvass your local library or "The Mudge" (under "Science" and "Applied Science") as this field is blanketed with good source books. A valuable

general one is *Van Nostrand's Scientific Encyclopedia*. Of use, particularly for the how-to-do-it writer, is Henley's *Twentieth Century Book of Formulas, Processes, and Trade Secrets*.

Crime (detective stories, whodunits, articles etc.): Source books scanty and uneven in quality. Of some use is the *Encyclopedia of Criminology* edited by Branham and Kutash. Fiction writers may find occasional use for Jay Finley Christ's *An Irregular Guide to Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street* and for Ellery Queen's *The Detective Short Story, a Bibliography*. Grim but no doubt gratifying to homicide connoisseurs is the "Merck Index" with its information on some poisons and their antidotes.

A friend who has looked over my shoulder occasionally as this series was pounded out has voiced a criticism. "Too much attention to the

hard work of research," is his complaint. "Why not sugarcoat it a little by putting more stress on the romance of it all?"

Well, better later than never. Personally I would say that the writer who wants romance should go to the movies, but I'll concede there is a "fascination frantic" in the skillful uncovering of material. There is an exhilaration in trapping an elusive fact, in turning a page and finding in one brief sentence the fact that you know will extract your piece from the silt of mediocrity.

All the same it's hard work, and my impression is most writers would be mighty skeptical of any effort to blink the fact. All phases of writing are hard work, and the wholly romantic approach to any of them—to echo a famous quip—can only lead the writer into the suburbs of literature and leave him there!

No Period Talk? Nonsense!

By GLADYS HASTY CARROLL

I READ recently of a publisher who advocated a new law for historical novelists: No Period Talk. He quoted someone else as saying that people used to talk so that they could understand one another, and those who now write of them should make them talk so that we can understand them.

May I protest? I am strongly against laws to regulate the work of honest writers. I could not hold in high regard a novelist who "makes" his characters talk; I am opposed to coercing characters in this or any other way. And I resent the implication that readers can understand only what they hear with their own ears on the street every day.

My 12-year-old daughter came in chanting, "Give me to drink, I burn; this sorrow sappeth my strength . . . There, take away the cup."

"What's that?" I asked.

"*The Prince and the Pauper*. It's nice to say. I go around saying parts of it all the time. Like 'Nan! Bet! Kick off thy straw and hie thee hither to my side!' Some of the kids ask what it means. They like the sound of it, but of course you can't understand it without reading the book from the beginning. The first few pages seem almost like a foreign language, but then you fall right into it. It's just as natural a way to talk as ours, as soon as you're used to it."

Isn't this true of any well-written book, as of any unfamiliar accent, and even of foreign languages? Most of us can understand more and more of it, the more we try. And if we don't try, how are we going to see farther than the end of our noses? If we accept the premise that we can't understand "period talk" we shut ourselves off, not only from characters in current fiction who use it, but from all the great writers to whom what is now "period talk" was current talk.

"It is not necessary to burn the books. All we have to do is leave them unread for a couple of generations."

If we say that people talked 200 years ago only to communicate with their neighbors of the time (and therefore the way they talked is not important to us), we can as logically say that they wore clothes only to keep covered, had houses only for shelter, traveled only to get to some other place, had problems peculiar to their era. So what is felt? Why write or read about them at all?

I am quite convinced that people talked then, as now, as much for the purpose of expressing themselves as to communicate with their contemporaries, and that what they were is largely revealed in their choice of words and their phraseology. Just as it seems to me obvious that the clothes they wore, the home they occupied, their means of transportation, and the details of their everyday lives were an expression of what they were and a partial explanation of why they were that way.

Occasionally what is to be expressed—as in Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*—requires no scenery, no costumes, no vernacular. But this is far from true of all creative ideas, or of all the best ones. Omissions should be for a better reason than that the audience could not understand what is omitted if it were included. We are justified in omitting only what is assumed to be clearly understood or what is of no significance to the story we are telling.

In the family life of 200 years ago, say, there were many highly significant characteristics unknown to the average present-day reader which interest him profoundly once they have been shown to him, and reveal much in his own personality and times of which he was hitherto unaware.

Such revelations are also made, of course, in fictional studies of community life, church life, military life, court life, and not only of ancient but of recent periods and of the present.

Step-by-step, the way to write

The Popular One-Act Play

If it hits for amateur production, there may be a life income for you from the royalties

By LOUIS L. WILSON

ONE-ACT plays quite good enough to win publication in the non-royalty class can be dashed off in a few days. They sell for \$25 up. But invest the extra weeks usually needed to nurse through a widely appealing play of top royalty quality, and its production fees may bring you substantial returns annually for life.

More than 25 years ago when I made my first acquaintance with the amateur stage, two outstanding royalty plays were already standard fare for church, high school, college, and little theater production groups. They were Zona Gale's *The Neighbors* and Holworthy Hall's and Robert Middlemass' *The Valiant*. Both are still earning good royalties.

Are you as a writer interested in taking out that kind of annuity insurance? This article is a simple guide to help you. But first, buy or borrow copies of the plays just named, for this is merely the classroom lecture, those plays the basic textbooks of dramatic success.

Between short-story and one-act play is a vital difference. The story, being in a book to be read, stirs the emotions of but one person at a time. Its writer can to some extent choose and write for either a high-brow reader or a lowbrow, be broad or subtle. The play, on the other hand, stirs the emotions of many people seated together watching living actors. Its writer always deals with an audience made up of persons of many temperaments, many shades of culture and intelligence. He dare appeal only to those feelings and loyalties which they hold in common.

The first requisite of the one-act play of wide popular appeal is that it must deal with simple emotions and common loyalties expressed in easily understood ways.

Take your first step in writing such a play by listing down at the left side of a large sheet of

paper all the loves, sympathies, and loyalties which you share with at least 90 per cent of your fellow Americans.

Does Love of Family appear in your list? Around that emotional common denominator, Hall and Middlemass built *The Valiant*. To it they added other powerful emotions felt by all: sympathy for the strong and noble man caught in the trap of one mistake, admiration for a sacrifice made to protect the innocent and helpless, worship of courage.

Do Sympathy for the Orphaned and Lonely, Sympathy for the Awkwardness and Torment of an Adolescent Lover, Sympathy for Helpless Age, and Joy in Neighborly Helpfulness appear in your list? Using those universals, Zona Gale built *The Neighbors*, loved from high school assemblies to churches and women's clubs.

Americans love baseball, yet few attend the practice sessions of their local team. But let that team be playing a strong rival and the bleachers will be jammed. Let the Giants and the Dodgers play off the final game of the World Series—then what? Across the country factory managers allow workers portable radios at their work. High school classes drop lessons for broadcasts. Women stop housework to watch television. The whole country groans, boos, and cheers together.

Whether it be in sports or plays, dramatic interest begins only when rival forces clash. It ends the moment the final score clinches victory or defeat. The more intense the battle, the greater the cause at stake, and the more uncertain the outcome, the more completely is the audience enthralled.

If you want a successful play, ensure a partisan audience by first making your hero lovable. Then face him at once with the strongest possible opposition—an opposition which, at the very least, threatens his happiness and success, may threaten honor or even life. Complicate the opening situation with additional factors which create surprise and intensify the conflict. Keep the outcome in ever increasing doubt until your hero himself, out of the depths of his own character, makes the final, costly decision which ends the conflict. Then immediately draw the curtain.

Down the center of your work sheet list the strongest forces you can think of which might try to destroy the values listed at the left. In the space at the right list first the names of persons you know in whose lives the universal loves, sympathies, or loyalties listed at the left side are strong. List next persons who embody some of the forces of opposition. You will not, of course, use these actual

Louis L. Wilson is author of *Tardy April*, *Prize Money*, *The Testing Hour*, and other plays frequently presented by amateur groups. In addition he has written many pageants used at important church anniversaries. With Fred Eastman he is author of *Drama in the Church*, an outstanding book in its field. Also he has written innumerable articles for religious magazines, both juvenile and adult. Mr. Wilson has taught in the University of Denver and the Chicago Theological Seminary. He now lives in Arizona.

persons in your play. But they will help you create characters having the breath of life.

The powerful play of tragic situation, such as *The Valiant*, can become immensely popular, especially when it gives as great a lift to the spirit as its close as that play does. Such plays are so inherently strong that they transcend mediocre acting and become especially valuable to amateur groups looking for plays that will help them carry off prizes in dramatic tournaments. Since such groups repeat their contest play many times, this use becomes an important source of royalties.

But more likely to "come off" in the hands of the new playwright and win wide use is the play of mingled pathos and laughter such as *The Neighbors*. It is the young who give most amateur plays, and the young like to laugh. What is more, in times of widespread worry and tension, many producing groups feel that their audiences would rather laugh away their cares than take on additional heartaches with the characters of a tragic play. But never forget that even the predominantly humorous play is a more popular play if it has some touch of genuine heart tug. And, if you want your play to place in the royalty class, run from the artificial situations and gag lines of farce as you'd flee from an erupting volcano.

Other practical considerations are the limitations under which most amateur producing groups work. Funds are limited, so plays with simple, unshifted sets and simple costumes are given preference. It is easier to find women actors than to find men—much, much easier. So the play which has more female than male roles also tends to edge out competitors.

The stage is not the pulpit. Plays whose characters preach are dull plays. Yet no play can show a vital, human conflict decided in one way or another without at the same time making an implicit comment about life. This is the play's meaning content, its theme. The most popular plays tend to be those with heartening themes.

The obvious theme of *The Valiant* is its featured quotation from Shakespeare, "Cowards die many deaths; the valiant die but once." But from far greater depths of the play's action emerges a tremendous commentary on the ennobling effect of a worthwhile sacrifice of self for others. Similarly, much of the success of *The Neighbors* rests on its cheering theme that men are essentially good and that this goodness shines out when they forget their petty private concerns and act together as neighbors.

On another work sheet list a large number of encouraging, life-ennobling themes. State them as simple, declarative sentences: "The proud and powerful may have their day, but it is the simple and good of heart who achieve happiness," and so on.

THERE is no one way to plot. Try pairing each of the universal royalties you have listed against its opposing forces. Somewhere your imagination may wake to seize upon a strong and interesting life situation from which your play may take off. Try thinking of the personalities you have listed and pairing them off against each other, positive against negative. Put on each of your listed themes in turn, just as you'd don a pair of colored spectacles, and examine the ideas and personalities on

your work sheet as colored by that theme. Somewhere you may hear a mental click and know that there is your story.

Whatever else you may do, once an interesting dramatic idea comes to you, plot in creative freedom, enjoying your story as it comes to you, not caring a whoop about "technique." That can come later. Let your characters come alive and fascinate you by their thoughts and deeds. Do not feel that you must force them. Remember that your leading character is your theme, walking about on two legs. And what your characters do naturally, being in opposition to each other and being the kinds of persons that they are, is your plot.

HAS your story at last come thoroughly alive? Has it fired your imagination and deeply stirred your emotions? Then is the time to become technical.

A play tells its story through a succession of groupings of its actors upon the stage, each of which advances the plot one or more steps and then yields to a new grouping. Each portion of the play which is carried on by a single, unchanged group of actors is known as an episode. These are the play's building blocks.

Trace these successive episodes for yourself in *The Valiant*, noticing how few there are and how this gave the playwrights opportunity to develop each one for utmost emotional impact on the audience. Do the same with *The Neighbors*, noting the greater number of episodes, the more generally rambling structure, and the consequent lessening of emotional impact from that cause alone.

Now divide your own play into episodes and outline it, episode by episode, on paper. For each episode tell the number of actors involved, the information they must give the audience, what they will actually do while on stage, the emotions they should stir in the audience. Note how you plan to bring the emotional impact of the episode to a peak near its close.

Now think back.

Have you won audience sympathy for your hero immediately?

Have you plunged him into conflict as soon as possible?

Are there too many episodes, robbing your play of punch?

Could you start your play nearer the end on a more intense note?

Have you introduced a surprise element which grows naturally, however unexpectedly, out of what has gone before, and have you used this to increase the pressure upon your hero?

Does your play mount steadily in suspense and emotional power to the final moment when the hero makes his choice, and have you planned to play that peak moment for all the value there is in it?

Have you resisted the impulse to divide your play into scenes by drawing the curtains and so breaking up its gathering emotional momentum?

Next draw a large diagram of the stage, making it out in the usual acting areas: Center Stage, Down Center (toward the audience from center), Up Center (away from the audience), Left Center (just left of center for the actor as he faces the audience), Right Center, Up Left Center, Down Left Center, and so on. [Continued on Page 25]

Where to Find A MILLION STORY IDEAS

By RICHARD C. DAHL

IT'S a good bet that you've missed using one source of story ideas that's a gold mine. In your town or city there is, in all probability, a collection of over 1,000,000 story ideas. Pipe dream? Exaggeration? Not a bit. I'm speaking of the law library.

There are 2,500,000 American case reports; 30,000 more are published every year. Each is a report of a controversy with strong elements of opposition and suspense. The cases all deal with people facing important human problems. Thus on the shelves of the law library are found thousands of examples of conflict, the priceless ingredients of stories.

This wealth of raw material is yours for the using. Your taxes support your state, county, and university law libraries. Why not use them? I'm not suggesting that you use the law library as a mechanical plot device. My point is that there are hundreds of ideas to be found in the case reports. Take, for example, the case of *Laidlaw v. Sage*, (52 NE 679):

Norcross came into Sage's office with a satchel of dynamite. He handed Sage a letter threatening to drop the bag unless Sage gave him \$1,200. Sage jerked his employee, Laidlaw, in front of him to serve as a shield. Norcross exploded the dynamite and Laidlaw was seriously injured, but Sage escaped. Laidlaw, in this case, sues Sage for damages for using his body as a screen from the impending explosion.

Here certainly is a situation loaded with conflict and suspense. Perhaps you might use it as a plot germ as did Theodore Dreiser with *People v. Gillette* (83 NE 680). He developed *An American Tragedy* from the story idea supplied by the case of Chester E. Gillette who drowned poor Grace Brown in Big Moose Lake. Dreiser stuck pretty close to the full and accessible details of this case, changing it in part, however, to point up the moral issues.

Did you see the movie, *Place in the Sun*, based on this novel? Remember the conflict? The very human problem faced by the protagonist. This is the sort of thing that has been done and can be done with the plot germs and story ideas found in the myriad of cases on the shelves of your library.

I wish I could claim this idea of using the law library as a source for story ideas as my own. I can't. I stole it one day from an old gentleman who used my law library. As I recall, our conversation went something like this:

"Can I help you?"

"You already have, by letting me use this gold mine of yours."

"Gold mine?" (Better humor him.)

"Yep. It may be a law library to you, but it's a gold mine to me. I'm a writer."

"Oh?"

"I'm picking up situations and dialogue from your case reports."

"Now I get it. You're pirating plots." I was fond of alliterations in those days.

"Don't mix the metaphor, son. I'm a prospector, not a pirate. It takes a lot of work with this ore 'fore I turn it into gold."

By this time he had me intrigued. I figured he was good for a piece in the *Law Library Journal*, so I invited him out to coffee where we batted his method around a bit. I wish I could give this incident a twist ending and say that he turned out to be A. J. Cronin or Somerset Maugham, but I can't. He was Don somebody-or-other and selling to the pulps.

This incident made an impression on me if the old fellow's name didn't. I filed the idea away to be used if I turned from article writing to fiction. My contact with writers prior to this had been limited to answering reference questions about the authority of Western marshals, courtroom procedure, and divorce laws. For more than a year now I've been watching to find writers using the law library. I haven't found them. Apparently the old fellow's gold mine was a secret.

There have, of course, been a number of authors who have put the drama of the legal scene to good use. Such writers as Dickens, Arthur Train, Erle Stanley Gardner, James Gould Cozzens, Edward Bok, and others have used their experience as court reporters, lawyers, and judges to turn out hundreds of salable stories. These men have just scratched the surface. They've confined themselves to legal problem. Actually the case reports present thousands of human problems that can easily be divorced from their legal settings.

Take the cases that turn up in the divorce court. Suits for alienation of affection, "heart balm," cases that deal with slander, "spite" fences, fights, accidents, and labor problems. You name it, the law library's got it. It's a fantastic source of story elements that has been overlooked by most authors.

The TV show *Dragnet*, with its slice-of-life technique, has captured an audience of millions. This show does just what I'm suggesting you do. It builds its stories on the basis of actual incidents. The cases it dramatizes are those from the Los Angeles police files. You perhaps can't have access to the files of the Los Angeles police department. You can, however, have access to the 2,500,000 reported cases found in your law library.

Where is your nearest law library? Perhaps the

Richard C. Dahl is law librarian at the University of Nebraska, where he also teaches legal research. He has worked as an investigator as well as a librarian. Articles of his have appeared in important law and library journals, and he has contributed also to *Bluebook* and *Quote*.

simplest way to find out is to call a lawyer and ask him. Courts, judges, and lawyers simply can't operate without libraries. State capitals and county seats usually have large law libraries. Federal courts, state courts, and law schools also provide good-sized law libraries. The average state has about 15 law libraries of over 5,000 volumes.

There are 115,000 law office libraries in the United States. If you have a friend who is a lawyer he might let you use his collection. The distribution of law libraries is closely related to the distribution of lawyers. Thus cities whose population is over 200,000 will have on the average six large libraries. Unless you're lucky enough to live in an area so isolated that it is without lawyers or law suits, you can be sure you're not too far from a law library.

How does the law library differ from a writer's natural habitat, the public library? You'll find it arranged differently. Most of its books will be long sets of case reports arranged chronologically by states. To find cases on particular subjects you must use descriptive word indexes and various digests. These tools can best be explained to you by the law librarian. One further difference is that most law libraries are reference libraries and don't circulate their materials. Don't let this stop you. You'll find them fine places to work in.

Why not start by taking a look at the cases cited in this article? A case citation consists of a volume number, an abbreviation of the title of the set that the case is found in, and the page number. Give the citation to the librarian and he'll show you where the case is located. Modesty forbids me from dwelling at length on this fact, but librarians are a writer's best friends.

Or perhaps you're an independent soul. In that case, I suggest you just start browsing through the state reports or the sets labeled Reporter System.

An important factor in any story is the illusion of reality its author achieves. Nothing destroys this illusion quicker than stilted unlikelike dialogue. Good story dialogue is not, of course, as loose and rambling as everyday talk. Nevertheless, it must have the flavor of reality. Successful authors make a point of listening to speech and many, after much work, develop a good "ear" for dialogue. The law library is one of the few places where you have a chance to see unprepared speech recorded in print exactly as it was spoken. Ask the librarian for some government hearings or trials such as those found in the *Notable British Trials* series. See if the dialogue rings as true as this bit of frozen speech from *Tricoli v. Centalanzo* (126 Atl. 214):

"Run away, Maestro Juan, I am going to kill you." Short, to the point, and illogical, it was answered in the same vein: "You too son of a gun."

DO you find it hard to write dialogue in which the speaker makes consistent errors in grammar that are not your brand of grammatical mistakes? If so, you'll profit by examining testimony like the following that turned up in the divorce court:

"Well, right from the beginning when we got married, we were married a couple of weeks and, of course, I didn't look for him to go to work right away and just left him go for about three

weeks. After that I thought it was about time for us to start doing something."

Plots, situations, incidents, themes, and characters as well as dialogue will turn up in the case reports. A case report consists of a court's opinion that decides a controversy. Each case contains some conflict. In each case the facts that led to the conflict are set out by the judge or the court. As a writer interested in story ideas you can ignore the legal issues and jargon and select the material around which you intend to build your story.

IF you are interested in crime and mystery, you can start by browsing through some of the 156 volumes of the *Texas Criminal Reports*. These record the criminal cases of this state from 1887 to the present. Here you might find mention of Ball, the innkeeper, who fed his girl friends to his pet alligators. I don't suggest you use this story. It's to implausible.

Perhaps the case of the impotent sailor who ran into the "badger" game in Yugoslavia (83 N.Y.S. 2d 297) would interest you. *Reed v. Littleton* (289 N. Y. S. 798) tells of an ingenious dog racing gambling scheme. Littleton beats the rap by selling a purchase option on each dog in the race. If these are not exercised, he buys back such as he may elect at prices determined by him. Can't you see your hero coming up with a like scheme to save the old homestead?

Are you interested in humor? Take a look at *Cherry v. Des Moines Leader* (86 N.W. 323). You'll find an account of a most ridiculous stage performance and the blast it received from an outraged critic. An example of sheer tragedy is the case of *People v. Caruso* (246 N.Y. 437). Grief over the death of his child leads a parent to kill the physician who attended the child.

Adventure is found in *United States v. Holmes* (26 Fed. Cas. 360), where a horrifying tale of throwing persons overboard to lighten a leaky boat is detailed. A Western tale is told in *Territory v. Ketchum* (10 N.M. 718). After being found guilty in this case, train robber "Black Jack" Ketchum was asked if he wished to say anything. His reply was prompt: "I'd like to shave the district attorney."

Less exciting, but revealing their own form of conflict, are such cases as *Lee v. Lee* (3 S.W. 2d 672) dealing with a "shotgun" marriage. How would a married couple react if a hotel manager bursts into their room, accuses them of not being married and demands that they leave? (126 N.E. 647 or 15 So. 2d 358) What is the result of a marriage performed as a jest? Read *Clark v. Field*, (13 Vt. 460) or *McClung v. Terry* (21 N. J. eq. 225).

Are you interested in odd situations? Read then about the man who lived in jail by choice—*People v. Cady* (143 N.Y. 100). In *People v. Braun* (158 N.Y. 558), the story of a man who murders his wife while she is visiting him in prison is told.

These cases, and hundreds like them, are no substitute for experience or ability. They will, however, aid the creative mind by presenting it with incidents, situations, plots, dialogue, characters, themes, backgrounds, gimmicks, and problems. Your necessary raw material—the stuff of which stories are made. Don't take my word for it. Grab your notebook and start prospecting for yourself in your gold mine, the law library.

Do You Write to Please *Editors*? Don't!

By M. N. BUNKER

SO you are having trouble pleasing the editors. You get rejection slips because—not, definitely *not* because you do not please the editors. There is nothing in all the writing field that is sillier than to write with the idea of pleasing an editor. This is the truth. You'd be surprised how many selling writers know this, and keep it to themselves, because it is a secret that is worth knowing.

First of all, who do you think an editor is? And what do you think he is? Something sacrosanct, or something with horns and a tail? Get it out of your head. An editor is nothing of the kind.

Time and again I've heard beginning writers, and some far enough along to know better, say "If I only lived close to an editor, I'd—" I'd what? Just what would you do? You might go to the beach with him, you might go fishing with him, you might compare rosebuds if you are both flower growers, but outside of that you would not do a single thing if he were your neighbor—that is, if you were smart.

There are just two specific classifications of editors. This is biological. There are he editors, and she editors. The he editors wear long pants in the winter time, and short ones in the summer, exposing knobby knees. The other kind usually have pretty knees and expose them, rain or shine, hot or cold. There are some editors who are sobs, and other editors who are dobs, and and then there are just editors.

They make their living reading manuscripts, and sending a lot of them back. They gag and say naughty words when they get packages done up in pink or blue ribbon, depending on whether the package is a boy or girl brain baby.

They eventually get to be chain smokers and develop amazing vocabularies after years of trying to make sense out of interlineated manuscripts, with corrections made with red, blue, green and purple ink, such interlineations not being readable nor sensible. They like to see clean manuscripts, but especially they like manuscripts that were written, not for them to read, but for their customers.

That is the whole point. An editor is a buying agent. In some cases he got picked out of the slush pile because he had shown some sense of understanding about what the customers want. There are a lot of editors who never wrote a story, and maybe do not want to do so. There are a lot of other editors who write stuff under a dozen names, and what they write they sell because they do not write to please an editor. They write to please his customers.

Suppose you want to write love stories. All right, forget that Mysterious Being to whom you send words on paper, who lives in a swank (?) New York apartment, and start writing for your neighbors. If your love story would not be enjoyed by the women in your block, the editor who is

buying manuscripts to go into a magazine for your neighbors is not going to like it either. Because he gets down early, and stays late, and goes home with a briefcase of manuscripts to be read after dinner in exactly the same way that the purchasing agent for the dime stores looks at merchandise, takes a new toy home to one of his children to get a reaction, talks to his wife about it, and then decides, and the dime store sells a million of that particular item. He is not buying it because he likes to play with it, but because his customers want it.

After a while he gets the "feel" of such buying, and the kid at home grows up, and the old man still buys on the strength of his accumulated knowledge and experience. The manufacturers' agents do not think of that purchasing agent as someone they must please. They offer him something that has been designed to meet the whims, desires, or needs of one customer multiplied by a million. If they are sure they have a good product, those manufacturers' representatives take it to another purchasing agent if the first one, or the second, or even the third one turns down the package. They do this because the package was prepared for the customer, not with any idea of pleasing a purchasing agent.

They may play golf with him to butter him up, but they do not talk shop unless he starts it. They may live next door to him, but they don't use that as a door-opener—not if they are smart, they don't. They present their package because that package was produced to appeal to a certain type of customer.

So if you are having editor trouble, if you are thinking of editors as individuals, please forget it. Biologically they are put together like your neighbors. Some of them are dumb, and some are brilliant. Some of them have college educations, and some of them were never inside a college. They are mixtures of all sorts of blood strains. Some of them look like their fathers and some like their mothers and some like what the cat dragged in.

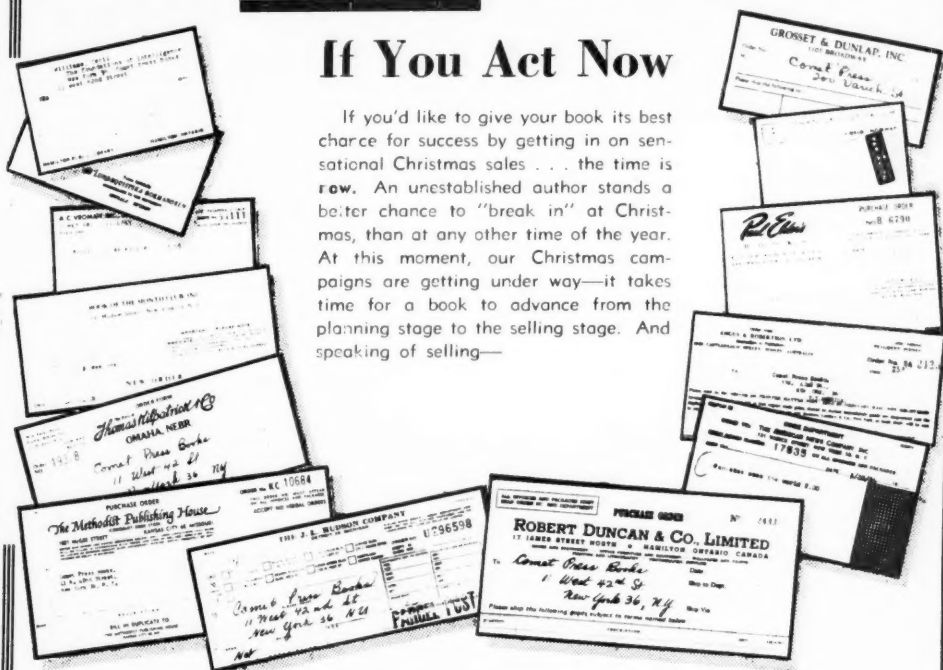
They are editors because somebody wished them on to the job as purchasing agent for a leg book, or a confession book, or possibly a mechanics book that is going to spend a million dollars to put another mechanics book out of business. If their buying is bad somebody else gets to be the editor. It happens in big magazines, and in cheaper rags.

If you make their buying easier by producing what the customer wants—what the fat lady across the street will laugh or cry over, you have the editor's heart and you get a crack at the publisher's pocketbook because you have produced a piece of merchandise they can sell and satisfy the customer. Look at it this way and you will start selling, then you will get to be friends with the editor—maybe. Maybe not. That has nothing to do with it.

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If Plotting Troubles You

By ALAN SWALLOW

EVERY writer of fiction I have known has been troubled by the word *plot*. And if the professional has worried over the meaning of the term, the beginner has been doubly troubled. He knows that the idea of *plot* strikes to the heart of the problem of writing fiction. Yet it is so unclear or ambiguous that it is not a helpful guide to his own writing.

Let's look for a moment at *plot* in the light of our whole notion of what constitutes fiction.

The general theory we are dealing with here is, I think, fairly simple. Fiction depends upon *narrative* more than upon any other device available to the writer. In fact, we usually identify the two words *narrative* and *story*. We know that there is no story unless there is narrative.

In turn, narrative means that we have *movement through time*: we start at one moment and move to another moment, be they years apart or only a few minutes apart. Now one thing we are quite certain of: in time, there is change; given some movement in time, there is always change. Time and change are synonymous.

Therefore, the chief device available to the writer of fiction (not the poet or non-fiction writer) is a narrative embodying some change. The simple fact is that in a story the end situation must be different from the beginning situation in some respect. What the story-writer has to say he says chiefly through the change he builds into his story.

We can make a very clear distinction. When we have change, we have a story. When we have a piece of fiction which does not show any change in situation from beginning to ending, then we do not have a story at all, but instead a sketch, anecdote, or whatever.

This is a useful distinction. A problem that plagues many writers is to be able to tell when they have a story at all. Or how do we tell when we have only an anecdote instead of a story? This, then, is the test to be applied: Does the work show change? If it does, it is a story. If it doesn't it is not a story.

We can apply this same test to the concept of plot. If a piece of fiction shows change then we have plot, at least in essential, basic form. The change or plot may not satisfy us, because we have built up certain expectations for a plot; yet we have the essential beginnings for a plot and may need only to arrange for the greatest satisfaction from the basic change we are using.

The use of the word *plot* is complicated because it is often used in a very narrow sense; that is, to name the kind of change which is used in the popular story alone. Such a plot uses change, but it puts a very special form upon how the change is shown and what the nature of a "usable" change may be for certain magazines.

In other words, the popular story has a rather special plot, or change. This special way is to have the opening of the story show a considerable

tension, seeming to demand some sort of change; this initial situation must be complicated rather than simplified before the moment of significant change sets in; the forces of the tension built up must seem to achieve a near balance before the scale is tipped and the change actually occurs. Finally, the change embodied in a popular story is more often a change in situation than a change in character.

Fortunately it seems to me, the fiction writer of today is better off than he once was in being able to focus his attention upon significant change in any possible story material. The reason is that the magazines have become more liberal than they once were, allowing the writer to search his material for significant change rather than requiring a very specific, predetermined plot.

A little more theory helps at this point. Since a story involves *character in situation* and a *change* in that combination, there are two types of change. One is a change in the situation rather than character; the other is a change more in character than in his situation.

The story of situation change is usually a story in which the character achieves something. For example, at the opening of the story a man may find his pockets empty, whereas at the end he may be wealthy. Or he may at the beginning be at large, free in society; at the end he finds himself behind bars of a prison. Or he may have threatening enemies; at the end he has defeated those enemies. Frequently, such fiction has a heavy "action" basis, since overt matters—that is, matters outside the person himself—must be moved and changed.

The other type we can call a character or psychological story. The story is one primarily of realization, of response and change upon the part of a character as he matures or learns something new. Perhaps at the opening of the story the character is prone to anger, but during the story he learns to control that anger. Or he may progress from an immature attitude toward love, to a mature attitude. The change is internal, inward, psychological—in attitude, ideas, or personality.

In much of our best fiction these two types of change may occur together in the same story. For example, the external, overt situation may bring about in the character a change in attitude or personality; then, on the basis of the new attitude or new personality, the character may *act* to change the situation in which he finds himself, shaping it more in accord with his attitudes. Or many other combinations may be worked out.

To the writer who has difficulty with *plot*, I can recommend a look at the term *change*. Examine your stories and analyze them for change. If you don't have change, find out why; then develop a full change for your story. When you develop an ability to "see" change, you are ready to see stories and can progress to the problems of best writing out the "plot" you have discovered.

What Editors Want Now

The New True Confessions

True Confessions, the Fawcett confession magazine, is being rebuilt into an essentially new publication by William C. Lengel, who has made a notable success of Gold Medal Books and other enterprises he has headed.

Mr. Lengel aims to give *True Confessions* "dignity and importance" and at the same time make it "timely, human and informative." In addition to stories, he plans entertaining and informative short features on beauty, foods, fashions, health, child care and other subjects of interest to young married women. The magazine will no longer be divided into departments.

Requirements for confession stories are defined thus by Mr. Lengel:

1. Our stories should be written in the first person.
2. They should present a provocative, intriguing problem or situation, involving people (characters) whom the reader is immediately excited about.
3. There should be a sincere, honest, probing sense of dramatic tensing in the development.
4. The opening situation should create an urgency to read—and lead to an inevitable ending that is honest and natural to the situation or problem and to the characters and story, whether a "happy" ending or an "unhappy" ending.
5. An honest first-person story can be interesting in itself without having all of the breast-beating, "woe is me" ingredients of the old-time typical confession story.

True Confessions pays from 4c a word up on acceptance. Address Mr. Lengel at 67 West 44th St., New York 36.

— A&J —

Railroad Magazine, which has run as a pulp for a number of years, will become a flat-size slick with the September issue. Freeman H. Hubbard edits this publication at 205 E. 42nd St., New York 17, and pays up to 4c a word on acceptance.

The magazine is overstocked with fiction and wants only feature articles, first-person true tales, and human interest photo stories within its field—which lately has been expanded to include trolley cars as well as railroads.

Ken W. Purdy, editor of *True* since 1949, has become editor of *Argosy*, another important magazine in the men's group. Thomas J. Naughton will be his executive editor.

While he has not yet announced changes in *Argosy*, he indicates that he will not be "restricted by shibboleth and convention." "You can get down to business with a man's magazine," he adds. "The poor guys on the general magazines are so restricted by one thing or another that they're forever knocking themselves out to make something important out of a story 'Is There Hope for Three-Headed Guppies?' or 'Will Your Child Be a Hashish-Eater?'"

Address your queries to Mr. Purdy at 205 E. 42nd St., New York 17. *Argosy* is a magazine of mass circulation (1,250,000) and pays high rates on acceptance.

— A&J —

The *Auto Glass Journal*, 505 Marlboro Road, Wood-Ridge, N. J., will purchase articles and interviews on auto glass replacement shops. The emphasis should be on the success angle—the reasons why the shop enjoys a good business—the background of the owner, his experiences, side-lights on employees, etc., etc. Other angles are: the physical layout of the shop; the sidelines carried; the business promotion methods; trade association activities; hobbies.

The editors suggest to writers:

Pick up the classified telephone directory and select the largest shop or the neatest shop in town for your subject. Write up to 1,000 words, and furnish two photos and negatives, please. We pay 2c per word, \$3 per photo on acceptance.

— A&J —

Three Pines publications—*Screenland*, *Silver Screen* and *True Life Stories*—are being temporarily suspended with the August issues because of "constantly spiraling production and distribution costs."

True Life Stories under Florence J. Schetty has offered a considerable market for freelance confession material.

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SPECIALIZED MARKETS

The annual List of Specialized Magazines, brought right up-to-date, will appear in the September *Author & Journalist*. Here you will find the wants of magazines dealing with religion, health, music, nature, education, hobbies, amusements, pets, and other specialized subjects. If you write any specialized material, as most writers do, this list will help you vastly in marketing your manuscripts.

Collier's, 640 Fifth Ave., New York 19, is currently looking for suspense stories, long and short, of a definitely extrovert type. Mrs. Eleanor Stierhem Rawson is fiction editor. *Collier's* pays top rates on acceptance.

— A&J —

I. T. Galanoy, editor of *Road and Track*, Box 110, Glendale, Calif., needs illustrated articles appealing specifically to the automobile enthusiasts who constitute his readers. Material on foreign sports cars is especially welcome. So is appropriate humor not beyond 1,000 words.

Mr. Galanoy urges that prospective contributors examine the magazine, for 90 per cent of the MSS. submitted to him are entirely outside his publication's field.

— A&J —

If you have in mind a feature or profile full of liveliness and timeliness, better query Harris Shevelson at *Parade*, 535 Fifth Ave., New York 17. Payment is up to \$500 an article.

Don't submit any manuscripts without query and go-ahead from Mr. Shevelson, for he operates solely on the assignment basis.

— A&J —

Charles S. Strong, supervising editor of *Stand-ard Magazines* and *Better Publications*, has resigned in order to complete a book under contract and to do other literary work. Many writers have become acquainted with Mr. Strong over the past 18 years and will wish to keep in touch with him. He may be reached at 17 Vanderbilt Road, Manhasset, N. Y.

Western Plumbing & Heating Journal now covers the 17 Western states, including North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Editorial needs include both news and features about plumbing and heating contractors in the territory served.

Features must be fact-packed and contain useful ideas which can be adapted by other contractors. Licensed plumbing and heating contractors operating stores in conjunction with a contracting business are the best sources for feature material.

Length of articles, 400-1,500 words. Features must be accompanied by sharp glossy 8x10 photos.

Rates: News 50¢ an inch (about 1¼¢ a word). Feature rates start at 1¢ a word with \$3 for photo. Higher rates are paid for tightly written stories having "lifelike" ideas. All accepted feature stories are paid for immediately. News is paid for on publication. Address G. Hendrickson.

— A&J —

Columbia Publications, 241 Church St., New York 13, are currently overstocked with manuscripts of all types and lengths, writes Robert W. Lowndes, the editor. They will not be considering new material till October.

This chain includes *Famous Detective Stories*, *Smashing Detective Stories*, *Gay Love Stories*, *Ideal Love Stories*, *Real Western Romances*, *Today's Love Stories*, *Dynamic Science Fiction*, *Future Science Fiction*, *Science Fiction Quarterly*, *Super Sports*, *Ten Story Sports*, *Double Action Western*, *Famous Western*, *Real Western Stories*, *Western Action*.

— A&J —

Golf Graphic, 278 Clinton Place, Newark 8, N.J., offers a market for articles aimed at the mass of average golfers. It is especially interested in features of around 2,000 words giving the "secrets" of golf greats, telling how they play, and personality sketches.

Payment is \$25 for a regular feature, with \$3-\$5 each for photos or sketches used. Short items bring \$5-\$15. Address queries to Jack B. Cherwin, the executive editor.

Golf Graphic is a national monthly, having expanded from a regional magazine, the *Metropolitan Golfer*.

IF YOU HAVE WRITTEN A BOOK

this ad may prove important to you. For you now have a great decision to make.

You can either mail your book in to the publisher's office where it often waits for weeks in the slush pile, then is read by an anonymous, overworked reader—or you can cut the red tape and have your book handled by a qualified, responsible agent on an individual basis.

In this respect, there are vital advantages to working with me. First, I give your book a thorough evaluation, based on what today's market is buying. Second, when your book is ready to market I will give you a bona fide list, showing exactly what progress we are making, with names and dates of submissions. As I am in the most desirable section of the publishing district, I can submit in hours, and arrange personal contacts easily. If your book sells, I take my usual 10% commission and handle you in foreign markets through my European representative in Paris.

So mail me your book today with the handling fee of fifteen dollars. It covers all costs of the evaluation and agenting.

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130 East 37th Street



New York 16, New York

Good Business, published by the Unity School of Christianity, Lee's Summit, Mo., continues to offer opportunity for articles of 800-1,600 words and fillers of 400 words showing the application of Christian principles to business. Payment is from 2c a word up with \$6 each for photographs. A limited amount of verse is bought at 35c a line. Payment is on acceptance. Clinton E. Bernard is editor.

Before submitting a manuscript the writer should ask four questions, suggests the editor: (1) Is it helpful? (2) Is it interesting? (3) Is it kind? (4) Is it slanted right? *Good Business* aims to avoid mention of medical or surgical treatment, death, astrology, spiritualism, meat-eating, tobacco, and liquor.

- A&J -

Miss Deloris Kanten is now editing the three story papers of the Augustana Lutheran Church: the *Little Folks* (5-8 years), the *Olive Leaf* (9-11 years), and the *Young People* (12-15 years).

The magazines want puzzles, poems, games, stories and articles that build Christian character. Payment is \$5 per 1,000 words of prose, 25c per four lines of verse.

Address Miss Kanten at 2445 Park Ave., Minneapolis 4, Minn.

- A&J -

Montana Treasure and *Bit and Spur* have been combined into *Out West*, which carries the subtitle, "The Magazine of the Rocky Mountain West." It is devoted largely to pictorial features dealing with its region. Query the editor, L. V. Wilson, Box 551, Helena, Mont.

- A&J -

Starlanes is a new magazine devoted primarily to rhymed science fiction poetry but including also fantastic, weird and futuristic verse. No payment is made for verse. However, the Wm. Russell Ames Le Grande II. Medal of Merit is awarded annually for the best poem in the magazine. The editor is Orma McCormick, 1558 W. Hazelhurst St., Ferndale 20, Mich.

- A&J -

Discontinued Magazines

Famous Police Cases
Mr.
Science-Fiction Plus
Screenland
Silver Screen
True Life Stories
True Men's Stories
Vortex

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Where to Sell Plays for amateur production

THERE is a constant demand for good three-act and one-act plays suitable for amateur production. Schools, churches, and clubs constitute the major groups that produce such plays. The little theatres tend increasingly to use plays that have been Broadway successes though some undertake new drama, frequently of experimental type.

Plays for general amateur production should be definitely dramatic. Cheerfulness is another common requisite—there is little demand for gloomy drama. The writer must also avoid common moral and religious taboos.

Plays with comparatively few characters are most wanted, and often a predominance of female characters is preferred. Stage settings should be as simple as possible.

If a writer can get his play tried out by an amateur group before offering it for publication, he will usually see changes that should be made. It is possible to copyright a play prior to production or publication, and this is often desirable. Information and the necessary forms are obtainable from the Register of Copyrights, Library of Congress, Washington 25, D. C.

Firms that publish plays collect royalties on many of them for amateur production though some are offered without fee. For work promising any degree of popularity it is advantageous to the playwright to get a contract giving him a share in the royalties; the usual share is 50 per cent.

Walter H. Baker Company, 569 Boylston St., Boston 16. Caters to the amateur play market—schools, colleges, churches. Always willing to read any manuscript suited to this clientele. Plays in one stage set have a better chance for acceptance, as do also plays calling for more women than men in their casts. Reports in 2-3 weeks. Outright purchase or royalty. Edna Cahill, Editor.

The Countrywomen's League, The Curtis Publishing Company, Independence Square, Philadelphia 5, Pa. Educational skits 5-25 minutes, suitable for rural women's organizations, requiring few characters or stage properties. Payment \$25-\$100 on acceptance. Laura Lane.

T. S. Denison & Co., 321 Fifth Ave., S., Minneapolis 15, Minn. Full-length and one-act plays. Also books and collections of entertainment material. Authors may request a catalogue to discover types used. Reports ordinarily in 4 weeks. Usually outright purchase. L. M. Brings.

The Dramatic Publishing Co., 179 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 1. (40-50 plays yearly.) One-act and full-length plays, one-set shows preferred. Some plays with exclusively female casts. Has extensive market in high schools. Reports in 2-4 weeks. Outright purchase or royalty.

Eldridge Publishing Company, Franklin, Ohio. "The type of material used depends on the year's publishing schedule, but always includes three-act and one-act plays (drama, mystery comedies, mysteries, farce, and comedy drama) for schools, churches, women's and rural groups, etc. We are always glad to read entertainment material such as banquet books, stunt books, game books, humorous pantomimes, speakers' helps, monologue books, short skit books, stunts, novelties, etc. Manuscripts must be typed on one side of sheet only, double-spaced, and in the case of dramatized items, should be prepared in that form. Directions for staging, costuming and action, as well as dialogue, should be included. Any play should include plenty of action, and care should be taken to avoid stilted dialogue and trite plot. We prepare our publishing schedule in late fall for the succeeding year, so prefer to have manuscripts submitted between October and early spring. MSS. will, however, be considered at any time during the year. There is no reading charge. All short items and some longer material are purchased outright. We occasionally write royalty contracts for full evening plays." Payment on acceptance. H. C. Eldridge, Jr., Editor.

Samuel French, Inc., 25 W. 45th St., New York 36. One of the largest publishers of plays, offering a market for a variety of good drama. Handles plays for Broadway as well as amateur production. Branch offices in Hollywood and Toronto.

Gillum Book Co., 400-408 Woodland Ave., Kansas City 6, Mo. (About 50 plays yearly.) Publishes all kinds of home economics plays, in one or two scenes, 1,000-5,000 words, or running 20-30 minutes. Present demand is for nutrition plays, health plays, first aid, renovation of garments, fashion shows, etiquette plays, etc. Publisher judges submitted plays' theatrical possibilities, does not require testing before submission. Also buys monologues, humorous readings, verses, etc. Accepts or returns within a week after receipt. Outright purchase, average \$25 a play. Mrs. G. N. Gillum.

The Instructor, Dansville, N. Y. Plays for children, especially grades 3-6 inclusive. Holidays and other special occasions emphasized. Material which children can develop into plays for themselves. Payment \$10-\$20 on acceptance. Mary E. Owens.

Longmans, Green & Co., 55 Fifth Ave., New York 3. Well-written, clean one-act or three-act plays which have been tried out successfully in local production and are suitable for all types of amateur groups. Payment individually on the basis of each script. Address Play Department.

Northwestern Press, 315 Fifth Ave., S., Minneapolis, Minn. (60-75 yearly.) One-act and full-length plays suitable for high schools, colleges, churches, little theatres, and amateur groups; comedies preferred. Present need: strong dramatic one-act plays. Also publishes skits and various types of entertainment. Buys outright at rates depending upon estimated sales value of the material; also on royalty basis. Testing not necessary before submission, but

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Pasadena Playhouse, 39 S. El Molino Ave., Pasadena 1, Calif. Tries out original plays in its Laboratory Theatre which seats 50 to 60 people. No royalties are paid for original plays or those in public domain. Royalty paid for established plays. Any playwright interested in having an original play tried out in the Laboratory Theatre should write Manuscript Committee for conditions. No one-act plays considered.

Plays, The Drama Magazine for Young People, 8 Arlington St., Boston 16. (90-100 yearly.) One-act only, holiday, historical, comedies, fantasies, etc., suitable for production by school children. Magazine is divided into three sections according to age level—Junior and Senior High, Middle Grades, and Lower Grades. Payment on acceptance. A. S. Burack.

Row, Peterson & Co., 1911 Ridge Ave., Evanston, Ill. (10-15 plays yearly.) One-act and three-act plays for high schools, colleges, churches, and summer theatres. Continues to read play manuscripts, despite fairly complete supply already on hand. Writers are advised to analyze Row-Peterson catalogue of listings before submitting synopses or manuscripts. Preponderance of female characters preferred in three-act plays; could use one or two long plays for all-women casts; also three-act suspense plays, cleverly complicated with novel situations and some humor-relief. Heavily over-stocked with children's dramatic material and therefore returns such manuscripts unread. While testing before submission is not imperative, all scripts purchased are subjected to rigorous testing prior to publication. Endeavors to report within 2 weeks. Will buy outright, or arrange percentage-of-royalty contracts for authors of established reputation or highly promising young writers. Pays \$500 to \$1,000 for the exceptional three-act script reflecting genuinely original ideas and written with better-than-average competence and stageworthiness. Offers less for promising scripts requiring extensive editing, rewriting, or collaboration. Address: New Plays Editor, Office 18.

The Popular One-Act Play

[Continued from Page 15]

including the series for extreme left and right of stage. Block in the outlines of the stage set and all furnishings.

Mark a separate square of cardboard with the name of each character in the play. Then, using these counters, follow through your entire play, working out the movements of the actors and their groupings. This is to insure effective use of the entire acting area, meaningful grouping of your characters, and well-balanced stage pictures.

At last you are ready to write your play in terms of dialogue interspersed with the needed directions about setting and action. Study a printed play to make sure that you do this in the standard form. Rely on your actors to tell much of the story by movement, gesture and "business." Keep their spoken words brief, pointed, strictly in character, and as emotionally moving as possible.

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Syndicate Markets for Freelancers

OF the large number of syndicates comparatively few offer a market to the freelancer.

Most syndicates go in for continuing features and now have all they can sell. Also their experience is that most freelancers are not prepared to produce 300 good manuscripts a year.

A new feature usually originates on the editorial page of a newspaper. If it is outstandingly popular, a syndicate will consider it. Often the editor of the paper brings it to the attention of the syndicate.

Even though not normally open to freelancers, practically any syndicate will consider an outstanding idea for a continuing feature. The writer's best bet is to talk it over with the managing editor of one of the local daily newspapers, who will be able to advise him as to the most likely syndicates. Comic strips are a special case; they are discussed by Earle C. Bergman in the *May Author & Journalist*.

The usual practice of syndicates is to sell each series or item by itself. (Some, such as NEA, sell a package embracing many features of various types.) The rate charged depends on the circulation of the newspaper and other factors—not infrequently on what the syndicate salesman can get.

On steadily running features the syndicate usually splits the gross 50-50 with the author, though in many instances at least part of the advertising and promotion for the series is charged to the author. On individual items, sometimes a royalty, sometimes a flat fee, is paid by the syndicate.

The freelancer who wants to do some syndicate work—and perhaps eventually carry it on as a steady occupation—is likely to find his best opportunity in black and white or color photographs with amusing or arresting captions, or in photo stories. Fact features are also welcomed by some syndicates, as the following list shows.

The market for fiction and verse is very small and growing smaller. Nearly all such material is contracted for with authors accustomed to syndicate work. Much of the fiction syndicated is re-print of published books.

The syndicates listed below accept material from freelancers. Except for photographs and spot news features, one should not submit material without preliminary inquiry.

Anchor Features. West Coast Office, Suite 1145, 5864 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28, Calif. J. M. Davidson. Photos; also 16mm. motion picture footage for possible television use. MSS. with or without photos. 50% on still and motion photos, 10% on MSS.

AP News Features, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York. M. J. Wing. News, women's sports features, comics.

Associated Negro Press, 3531 S. Parkway, Chicago 15. News: current stories affecting people of color. Space rates for acceptable material.

Atlas Features Syndicate, 6455 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 28. Gerald W. Cahill. Crossword puzzles, news pictures, comic strips, features. Outright purchase or royalty, 50%.

Authenticated News, 170 Fifth Ave., New York 10. Rotogravure feature pages; considers exclusive up-to-date photos, news pictures, 8x10 glossy. Outright purchase, varying rates; or 50% royalty.

Aviation News & Views Service, Box 293, Upton, Kingston, N. Y. Features, cartoons, news service features and pictures, columns on aviation. Outright purchase at varying rates. Query first.

Black Star, 420 Lexington Ave., New York 17. Photo stories.

Camera Clix, 19 W. 44th St., New York 36. Photos only. Human interest sequences in 8x10 prints; color transparencies in minimum size of 4x5. Royalty or outright purchase.

Central Press Association (King Features Syndicate), 1435 E. 12th St., Cleveland, Ohio. Courtland C. Smith. News feature photos and pix on single subjects for picture layouts. Single photos \$5.

Gerard Chapman, 116 West Ave., Great Barrington, Mass. First and second rights to serials, short stories, and short-shorts by established writers only. Rates and methods of payment individually arranged.

Chicago Sun-Times Syndicate, 211 W. Wacker Drive, Chicago 6. E. A. Fitzhugh, Editor. Continuing newspaper features; columns, panels, strips. Contract and royalty basis.

Columbia Newphotos, 175 Fifth Ave., New York 10. 8x10 freelance photos; singles or series with feature slant. \$2-\$5 for black and white.

Craft Patterns, A. Neely Hall Productions, Elmhurst, Ill. A homecraft project service requiring first-class photos plus pencil sketches including complete measurements for shaping full-size patterns. "The percentage of usable material submitted is so small we have about given up looking for projects from this source." Payment on acceptance in accordance with value of project.

Dixie News Service, Inc., P. O. Box 1202, Hendersonville, N. C. L. E. Jaekel, President, Executive Editor; Mary S. Jaekel, Vice-President, Managing Editor. Significant newspaper columns by authorities in their field; serial rights to popular published books, any subject. Sunday feature section articles dealing with vital problems of the day. No photographs. No short stories. No poetry. Syndicate contract rate 50% net monthly.

Ewing Galloway, 420 Lexington Ave., New York. Serves publishers, advertising agencies, with photos of nearly everything on earth except purely ephemeral pictures (hot news today, old stuff tomorrow). Buys everything offered that seems to have a profitable outlet. Real test is good photography, plus subject matter with considerable audience. Prefers original negatives. No miniature film. Rates to \$25 a picture. Will buy one or 1,000 at a time.

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Globe Photos, 152 W. 54th St. (Adelphi Theatre Bldg.), New York 19. Elliot Stern. Photo features and articles from professional photographers or author-photographers. Features should have 10-20 pictures in color or black and white. Also single color photos for editorial, advertising, and calendar use. Human interest, landscapes, science subjects. Girls—both picture stories and color photos for covers. 50-50 for black and white, 60% to photographer for color.

Harris & Ewing Photo News Service, 570 Fifth Avenue, New York. Good pictures. Points and people of interest are acceptable if well done. Also, feature stories up to 10 pix, individually captioned. Topic and photography must be carefully turned out. Royalty basis.

Hollywood Press Syndicate, 6605 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, Calif. Joseph B. Polonsky. Supplies newspapers, etc., in all parts of world except United States and Canada. Can use fact adventure, illustrated interviews with prominent persons, news and feature photographs. 50/50 percentage.

Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 660 First Ave., New York 16, N. Y. Boris Smolar, Staff Columnist. Buys occasional feature articles of Jewish interest, 1,000-2,000. 1c a word on acceptance.

Keister Advertising Service, Strasburg, Va. Advertising copy for "Support the Church" series. \$10-\$25 for 125-word ad. Must be competent copywriting sympathetic with program. Information and proofs of ads available to qualified persons.

King Editors Features, 102 Hillier St., East Orange, N. J. Considers articles of interest to retailers generally in series (2 to 12), 800-1,500 words each. Royalty.

King Features Syndicate, Inc., 235 E. 45th St., New York. Ward Greene. A big general features service demanding top-notch continuous work. Royalty. Query with specific information.

Ledger Syndicate, 321 S. Fourth St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. In the market only for outstanding features by well-known writers and artists.

McClure Newspaper Syndicate, 247 W. 46th St., New York 36. Kathleen Caesar. Cartoons and comic strips, on contract only, largely from regular sources. Interested only in features that can run for a number of years, preferably daily, done by professionals. No fiction.

Metropolitan Press Agency, Box 293, Uptown, Kingston, N. Y. Features, news pictures, columns. Out-right purchase. "Query first or no attention!"

NEA Service, Inc., 1200 W. Third St., Cleveland 13, Ohio. News, sports, and women's features are handled in New York office, 461 Eighth Ave. Sumner Ahlbum, News Editor. In fiction, fast action, modern stories, any type, suitable for newspaper serials. Original stories 20,000 words and upwards are considered, as well as second rights on published novels. Payment by arrangement with author or his agent, better than 1c a word. Buys only newspaper rights, other rights remaining with author. Russ Winterbotham, Fiction Editor. Boys' and girls' page uses all types of material for youngsters 10 to 14, and some fiction. Word limit, 800. No continued stories, James Crossley, Juvenile Editor. All submissions to NEA except news, sports, and women's features should be made to Cleveland office.

New York Herald Tribune News Service, 230 W. 41st St., New York 36. Willet Weeks, Manager. Syndicates **Herald Tribune** features; buys occasionally from freelancers. Columns, comics, features. 50-50 percentage basis. Keith Spalding, Editor, buys freelance news coverage and news features.

North American Newspaper Alliance, Inc., 229 W. 43rd St., New York 36. John Schell. Interested in all types of exclusive news stories, of which it buys a certain amount from freelancers. From \$5-\$25 per box and story, depending on both quality and length.

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Paul's Photos, 3702 Lakewood Ave., Chicago 13. George F. Paul. Nature and human interest photographs of pictorial value or advertising appeal; photos of new inventions, of children in various activities, children at play, action farm scenes, pictures of special occasions, such as Christmas; strange sights and customs in foreign lands. Transparencies. Commission or outright purchase.

Pix, Inc., 250 Park Ave., New York 17. Leon Daniel. High-class photos, mainly series and sequences suitable for picture layouts in leading magazines. Color transparencies, if possible 4x5 or larger; however, 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 is acceptable to many editors and 35mm. for fast action shots only. All photographs have to carry captions. New York assignments mostly covered by photographers under contract, but assignments given frequently to out-of-town photographers. When submitting pictures state whether they have been published before and where. Black and white photographs on 50/50 basis. Color 60/40 (60% going to the photographer).

Post-Hall Syndicate, Inc., 342 Madison Ave., New York 17. Robert M. Hall. Comic strips; cartoons; special series of timely articles. First rights.

Press Alliance, Inc., 202 East 44th Street, New York 17. Paul Winkler, President and Editor. Rita Reil, Executive Manager. Features, columns, comic strips.

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Religious News Service, 381 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y. Louis Minsky. Religious news stories of wide interest to church people or the general public. Photos of religious interest. Openings in some areas for correspondents qualified to cover noteworthy religious developments. 1c a word up; \$5 a photo.

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Three Lions, 545 Fifth Ave., New York 17. News pictures and picture-stories, some from freelance writers; scientific picture stories for laymen. No articles accepted without illustrations. "We are interested in picture stories of professional quality. They should be scientific, human interest, for men appeal. Besides black and white picture stories we are also interested in color stories and single 4x5 color transparencies." Black and white picture stories are purchased outright, or handled on a 50/50 basis, color on a 60/40 basis.

Transworld Feature Syndicate, Inc., 23 W. 47th St., New York 36. Walter Hartman. Syndicates in foreign countries broadcast rights to radio and television scripts that have been produced in the United States. Also syndicates overseas books and short stories published in this country. 50/50 split on the gross. Query before submitting any material.

Underwood & Underwood News Photos, Inc., 3 W. 46th St., New York 36, N. Y. Howard N. Rubien, Editorial Director. All types of photos; glossy prints, minimum size 4x5. 50% royalty on publication.

United Press Newspictures, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York 1. Harold Blumenfeld. Considers news photos and feature pictures from freelancers. Payment on acceptance.

Universal Trade Press Syndicate, 1841 Broadway, New York 23. Myron S. Blumenthal. Services industrial, technical, and merchandising publications in practically all fields. Freelancers should query in 30 words, each query on a separate slip. Applications

from correspondents, preferably with trade journal experience, welcome. Payment 65-80% of receipts from customers.

Words & Picture Service, 61-30 156th St., Flushing, N. Y. Joseph R. Fabian, Editor. Material sought for "Odd but So," daily feature on oddities of nature, animal and plant life, state laws, etc. Maximum, 6 lines. Sources should be given where possible. Prospective contributors may obtain 12 proofs of the feature by sending 3c postage. Payment, 60c a line.

Contests and Awards

Dodd Mead & Company, Inc., in conjunction with *Boys' Life*, offers \$2,000-\$1,000 for first serial rights, \$1,000 against royalties—for a story of 45,000-80,000 words for boys 12-16 years old. The story should be of distinctive literary merit and in the finest American tradition.

Closing date, November 15, subject to possible extension to February 1, 1955, in the event a worthy manuscript is not received by the November date.

Address Dodd, Mead & Company, 432 Fourth Ave., New York 16.

—A&J—

Poets' Haven offers a prize of \$25 for the best Shakespearean sonnet on National Poetry Day. Closing date, September 1. Address Bettie Payne Wells, Contest Chairman, 1356 Thompson Ave., Glendale 1, Calif.

—A&J—

Contests Previously Announced

Atlantic Novel Contest, 8 Arlington St., Boston 16, Mass. Prize, \$5,000. Closing date, January 15, 1955. (*Author & Journalist*, March.)

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine Short Story Contest, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22. Twelve prizes, \$1,500-\$500. Closing date, October 20, 1954. (*Author & Journalist*, June.)

Writers' Service Book Contest, 7 E. 42nd St., New York 17. Prizes, \$1,000 for fiction, \$1,000 for non-fiction. Closing date, December 31, 1954. (*Author & Journalist*, March.)

Writers' Service Song Contest, 7 E. 42nd St., New York 17. Six prizes, \$500-\$50. Closing date, December 31, 1954. (*Author & Journalist*, March.)

Zondervan's Christian Textbook Contest, 847 Ottawa Ave., N. W., Grand Rapids 2, Mich. Three prizes, \$1,500, \$350, \$150. Closing date, September 30, 1955. (*Author & Journalist*, March.)

Zondervan's International Christian Fiction Contest, 847 Ottawa Ave., Grand Rapids 2, Mich. Three prizes, \$4,000, \$750, \$250. Closing date, December 31, 1954. (*Author & Journalist*, March.)

Zondervan's Juvenile Christian Fiction Contest, 847 Ottawa Ave., N. W., Grand Rapids 2, Mich. Three prizes, \$740, \$150, \$100. Closing date, June 30, 1955. (*Author & Journalist*, March.)

Writers contemplating entering contests listed should obtain full data from the publisher or organization sponsoring the contest. Always enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

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Selling Verse and Ideas to The Greeting Card Market

A NUMBER of greeting card manufacturers offer a market for freelance writers. Chiefly they seek humorous verse, preferably four lines, for special occasions. Generally speaking, it must be in conventional form and must appeal to the general public.

Some firms are in the market also for novel text and art ideas.

Payment for verse runs usually about 50c a line, sometimes a bit higher. Usable ideas for novelty stuff bring larger pay.

Increasingly greeting card manufacturers are employing staff writers, and so the freelance market is getting smaller. The reason for this is explained in a letter from the editor of a large firm to *Author & Journalist*:

"Our own writers have been given special training and have the advantage of our sales research in determining the best way to write the many types of greetings which we require."

As with every other market, the writer should analyze the type of material a given publisher uses. Practically all firms put their imprint on their cards, which may be examined at any greeting card counter.

It is desirable to submit eight to ten verses at the same time, but each should be on a separate sheet. Most writers put their copy on 3x5 slips, which will go into a standard No. 6¼ or No. 6¾ envelope. The most professional method is to use a No. 6¾ envelope and inclose a No. 6¼ envelope—stamped and addressed, of course—for return.

Any printing establishment will be familiar with these sizes. If you buy elsewhere, better measure the sizes: the outside envelope should be about 6¾ by 3½, the return envelope 6 by 3½. In getting stamped envelopes at a post office, ask for No. 13 for the outside, No. 5 for the return.

American Greetings Corporation, 1300 W. 78th St., Cleveland 2, Ohio. Buys little freelance material. Humorous and novelty verse for all occasions, but no conventional. Barbara Carpenter, Editorial Dept. \$1 a line.

Artistic Card Co., 1575 Lake St., Elmira, N. Y. Christmas, birthday, convalescent, everyday verse, 4-8 lines. 50c-\$1 a line. Query before submitting.

Barker Greeting Card Co., Barker Bldg., 14th & Clay Sts., Cincinnati, Ohio. Sophisticated, humorous, holiday, everyday adult verse and juvenile verse, preferably 4 lines. Rate of payment depends on merit. Unusual, different, clever, novelty ideas wanted only. Anything sentimental not needed. Alvin Barker.

Buzza-Carodoza, 127 N. San Vicente Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. Humorous and sentimental everyday verse 4-8 lines. Helen Farries. 50c a line on acceptance.

Card Masters, Inc., 239 W. 66th St., New York 23. Everyday verse and verse for special occasions, chiefly humorous. Also gags. D. S. Korn. \$10 a verse or gag.

The Fairfield Line, Inc., 2732 Fullerton Ave., Chicago 47. At present interested only in general, relative, and juvenile birthday; convalescent; anniversary, wedding, and birth congratulations; sympathy, religious and general; gift enclosures for birthday, shower, wedding, and baby gifts; general thank-you notes; belated birthday. Especially interested in 4-line general,

conventional verse that can be sent by a man or woman to a man or woman. Omit personal pronoun, slang, "cuteness." Some 8-line verse acceptable, especially in the relative birthday category. Anne Bradford, Editorial Department—E.

Fravesi-Lamont, Inc., 55 Gouverneur St., Newark, N. J. A very limited market for short verse, chiefly humorous. Payment at varying rates.

Gatto Engraving Company, Inc., 52 Duane St., New York. Verse for all occasions. S. Yuster, Editor. 75c a line. Acc.

Gibson Art Co., Fourth and Plum Sts., Cincinnati, Ohio. Largely staff-written. Restricted market. Professionals with outstanding material always considered. Helen Steiner Rice, Editor. Rates flexible.

Greetings, Inc., 8 Richards St., Joliet, Ill. Holiday, convalescent, religious, juvenile, conventional, everyday, birthday verses, 4 to 8 lines; occasional unrhymed sentiments; humorous and clever ideas. "We like our verses to be conventional in style, simple in wording, clear in grammatical construction, and fresh and original in theme." Florence Thompson. 50c a line. Special price for unique and clever greeting card material. Acc.

Martha Washington Studios, 551 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. Verses suitable for Christmas, birthday, convalescent, sympathy, anniversary, congratulations, bon voyage, wedding, baby congratulations, gift enclosure, thank you, friendship. 2-4 lines preferred. M. A. Haven. 50c a line.

Metropolitan Lithograph and Publishing Co., Everett 49, Mass. Verses 4-8 lines for all occasions. 50c per line. Humorous, to \$50 with sketch.

Novo Products, Inc., 1166 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago 22. Market for clever, novel, comic-type greeting cards. Currently buying Christmas, everyday, and Valentines. "We accept only ideas that have a surprise ending, a clever play on words, or a comic gag built around a gadget or attachment. We pay \$7.50 for every idea accepted. A sketch is preferable, but typewritten 3x5 card with the idea written out and the illustration suggested in writing, will do. Please do not send us religious, sentimental ideas."

Julius Pollak & Sons, Inc., 45-35 Van Dam St., Long Island City 1, N. Y. Verses for birthday, everyday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, Christmas, Valentine Day. Prefers 4-8 lines. Frances Stimmel, Editor. 50c a line for general material.

Rust Craft Publishers, 1000 Washington St., Boston 18, Mass. Needs cute and humorous material for all greeting card occasions. Material should be brief and to the point, either prose or verse, and a suggestion of the author's idea for design is sometimes helpful. Serious verse is mostly staff-written. Address inquiries and manuscripts to H. A. Bates. Payment on acceptance.

The P. F. Volland Company, 8 Richards Street, Joliet, Ill. "We are interested in humorous ideas for greeting cards for all occasions. Buy ideas in rough dummy form and prefer experienced greeting card writers. Pay premium prices for unusual ideas." Marjorie Gripton, Editor.

The Warner Press, Anderson, Ind. Verse 4-6 lines. A few religious prose sentiments. All material is religious or semireligious, but not sentimental, preachy, or doctrinal. Prefers to have a suggested Scripture text, with reference, accompany each sentiment. No payment is made for Scripture. Buys at specific times: Easter and everyday March 1; Christmas around June 1. Does not wish submissions before March 1 or after June 1. Heavily stocked with Easter material. 50c a line.

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Vol. I, No. 9

August, 1954

"Through Alaska's Back Door" Chosen by National Travel Book Club as its July Selection for July

Third Edition of "Daddy Was An Undertaker"

Sold Out; Over 10,000 Copies Have Been Published

The final copies of the third edition of *Daddy Was An Undertaker* by McDill McCowen Gassman, were shipped out during July, 1954, just over two years from the time the first edition was published. This magnificent sales success is an illustration of what *Vantage's* sales, publicity and advertising departments may be able to do for your book. Heavy dealer sales, direct mail promotion, excellent publicity and reviews combined to make *Daddy* an outstanding *Vantage* success. Would you like this kind of service for your book? Mail the coupon below for a copy of our 24-page brochure explaining *Vantage's* unusual publishing plan.

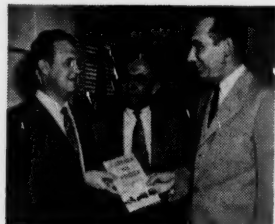
Vantage Author Presents Book to United States Government Official

Washington, D. C. — William Sheppard, author of *Careers on Wheels*, recently presented a copy of his book to U. S. Small Business Administrator Wendell B. Barnes. Sheppard's book, published by *Vantage Press*, is dedicated to "America's Small Businessmen."

Also present at the ceremony in the Nation's Capitol was Congressman S. Walter Stauffer of York, Pa., widely known for his interest in the problems of the small businessman.

Careers On Wheels traces the three-generation business history of Philadelphia's Wolfington family as it progressed from carriage making to custom automobile body production, to its activity today as dealers in cars, buses, ambulances and hearses.

William Sheppard is a free-lance writer specializing in business subjects. He has written several company histories, and his articles have appeared in over three dozen magazines.



Left to Right: U. S. Small Business Administrator Wendell B. Barnes; Congressman S. Walter Stauffer; William Sheppard, author of *Careers on Wheels*.

Major Chicago Radio Station to Dramatize A Vantage Juvenile

As we go to press, *Vantage's* Sales Promotion Director, Irwin Winehouse, has completed arrangements with Station WLS, Chicago radio, to dramatize scenes from *Artie Lizard's Long Trail* by Bobbie Carmichael Montgomery, published recently.

WLS is a 50,000-watt, leading Chicago radio station, and its broadcasts are beamed to millions of listeners throughout the Midwest.

Artie Lizard's Long Trail is an illustrated book for children from four to eight. The author is a second-grade teacher in Yakima County, Washington State. This dramatization is another illustration of the far-flung and aggressive promotional activities of *Vantage Press* for its authors.

New York, N. Y.—*Through Alaska's Back Door*, by Dr. B. F. Ederer, a California dentist, was chosen as the July, 1954, selection of the National Travel Book Club, New York. This is the third time the Club has chosen a *Vantage* book; the other two choices were *Hummel*, by E. Allen Petersen, and *Across the Peruvian Andes* by John Sayle, Jr.



Dr. Ederer's book is his exciting, personal adventure story of a trip down the mighty Mackenzie and Yukon river systems to Juneau, in a freighted canoe. No one, said Alaska's sourdoughs, could negotiate this trip in one season, but the author, with an abiding love for the great outdoors, proved them wrong.

Clark Kinnaird, noted book reviewer, said "Dr. Ederer points a way for others of adventurous blood to spend a summer . . . he gives details of his equipment and helpful hints to those who hanker to follow the same trail." The *Navy News Review* said: "It was indeed a trip of adventure, and his account is exciting and daring."

In June, 1954, Dr. Ederer's book was chosen by the Manuscripts Club of Los Angeles as the best nonfiction work of the month by a California writer.

If you would like to read this fascinating tale of adventure, write to *Vantage Press*, 120 W. 31 St., New York. The book sells for \$3.00, but by mentioning this special offer in *Author & Journalist*, we'll send you a copy for only \$2.00. You'll be delighted with *Through Alaska's Back Door*.

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